

ASPERGERS SYNDROME

Asperger syndrome (AS) is a neurobiological disorder and comes under the group of conditions referred to as Autism Spectrum Disorder. The disorder was first described by Hans Asperger, a Viennese pediatrician in 1940.

Features of AS:

This condition is common in boys. These boys typically have normal intelligence and language development, but they have impaired social skills, are unable to communicate effectively with others, and have poor coordination. They may also have obsessions, odd speech patterns, and other peculiar mannerisms. Children with AS often have few facial expressions and have difficulty reading the body language of others; they might display an unusual sensitivity to sensory stimuli (for example, they may be bothered by a light that no one else notices; they may cover their ears to block out sounds in the environment; or they might prefer to wear clothing made only of a certain material).

Other characteristics of AS include motor delays, clumsiness, limited interests, and peculiar preoccupations. Adults with AS have trouble demonstrating empathy for others, and social interactions continue to be difficult.

Overall, people with AS are capable of functioning in everyday life but tend to be somewhat socially immature and may be seen by others as odd or eccentric.

It's important to note that, unlike kids with autism, those with AS might show no delays in language development; they usually have good grammatical skills and an advanced vocabulary at an early age. However, they typically do exhibit a language disorder — they might be very literal and have trouble using language in a social context.

Often there are no obvious delays in cognitive development or in age-appropriate self-help skills such as feeding and dressing themselves. Although kids with AS can have problems with attention span and organization and have skills that seem well developed in some areas and lacking in others, they usually have average and sometimes above-average intelligence. Many have excellent rote memory and become intensely interested in one or two subjects.

To summarize, the common symptoms & signs of AS are:

- Social problems:
 - Difficulty in making friends

- Socially inappropriate behavior
- Difficulty judging personal space
- Rigid social behavior.

Abnormal communication patterns:

- Awkward or inappropriate body language and/ or,
- Unusual style of speaking and/or,
- Difficulty with "give and take" in conversation and/or,
- Lack of sensitivity about interrupting others during conversations and/or,
- "Scripted," "robotic," or repetitive speech

Activities:

- Inflexible adherences to routines and/ or,
- Apprehensiveness about change and/or,
- Intense interest in a particular subject or activity and/ or,
- Obsession with complex topics such as patterns or music and/ or,
- Odd behaviors or mannerisms

Sensory sensitivity:

- Sensitivity to sound, touch, taste, light, and smell.

Motor skill delays:

- clumsiness or poor coordination and/ or,
- history of delayed development of motor skills and/or,
- deficits in visual-motor and visual-perceptual skills; including problems with manual dexterity, handwriting, balance, and imitation of movements and/ or,
- problems with reading, math, or writing skills

Asperger's Syndrome is commonly diagnosed after age 3, with most diagnosed between the ages of 5 and 9.

[What Causes Asperger Syndrome?](#)

The cause is not definitely known. Heredity may be a factor; environmental factors that affect brain development might play a role.

AS is not caused by emotional deprivation or the way a person has been brought up. It is not a result of bad parenting.

Treatment:

Currently, there is no cure for the disorder — kids with AS become adults with AS. But many lead full and happy lives, and the likelihood of achieving this is enhanced with appropriate education, support, and resources.

The following may benefit the child:

- parent education and training
- specialized educational interventions for the child
- social skills training
- language therapy
- sensory integration training for younger kids, usually performed by an occupational therapist, in which they are desensitized to stimuli to which they're overly sensitive
- psychotherapy or behavioral/cognitive therapy for older children
- medications

All the child's caregivers should be involved in the treatment. The health professionals who are caring for your child should know what the parents & other care givers are doing at home.